

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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31 lawmakers ask State Department for greater UN accountability in Lebanon;

Iran builds 10 more uranium-enrichment sites as Hezbollah increases attacks on Israel;

Representatives: “We are seriously concerned by the potential for an Iranian-backed escalation on the Lebanese-Israeli border.”

WASHINGTON – Following recent reports that Iran plans to build 10 more uranium-enriched sites in the Middle East nation, U.S. Reps. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.) and Steve Israel (D-N.Y.) along with 29 bipartisan members of Congress today sent a letter to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton seeking more accountability from the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in the disarmament of Hezbollah and eliminating Iranian weapons in Southern Lebanon.

In August 2006, as Israeli forces worked to clear Southern Lebanon of Iranian weapons used by Hezbollah terrorists to attack Israeli cities, the U.N. Security Council unanimously approved Resolution 1701, which called for the disarmament of Hezbollah and the deployment of Lebanese soldiers and an enlarged UNIFIL force in southern Lebanon.

More than three years later, the situation is getting worse. According to news reports and statements by the United Nations, Hezbollah has fully re-armed and cross-border attacks have increased in frequency.

“For Fiscal Year 2010, your Administration requested \$210 million for UNIFIL and \$100 million in military assistance for the Government of Lebanon,” the lawmakers wrote. “For that much money, American taxpayers deserve to see results. Given the potential for an Iran-backed escalation on the Lebanese-Israeli border, the United States must use existing resources to counter this threat. In light of the clear violations of UN Security Council resolutions, we ask what actions the Administration is taking to ensure the U.N. addresses these violations. We must seek to support stronger multilateral efforts to disarm Hezbollah and clear Southern Lebanon of Iranian weapons.”

The letter to Secretary Clinton along with cosigners is below.

Dec. 3, 2009

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Madam Secretary:

As negotiations with Iran over its nuclear program begin to stall, the Iranian regime may seek to

divert international attention by ordering its Hezbollah terrorist proxy in Southern Lebanon to trigger a regional conflict.

Given the increasing number of cross-border attacks from Lebanon into Israel and the recent Israeli seizure of Iranian weapons headed for Lebanon, we are seriously concerned by the potential for an Iranian-backed escalation on the Lebanese-Israeli border.

As you know, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright designated Hezbollah an official Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) under U.S. law (8 U.S.C. 1101) in October 1997. According to the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, Hezbollah murdered 241 U.S. servicemen in 1983 at the Marine Barracks in Beirut. Hezbollah also claimed responsibility for the murder of 17 Americans at the U.S. Embassy, Beirut under the pseudonym, "Islamic Jihad." Most recently, you recertified Hezbollah's FTO status on July 9, 2009.

In August 2006, as Israeli forces worked to clear Southern Lebanon of Iranian weapons used by Hezbollah terrorists to attack Israeli cities, the U.N. Security Council unanimously approved Resolution 1701, which called for the disarmament of Hezbollah and the deployment of Lebanese soldiers and an enlarged United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) force in southern Lebanon.

The situation is getting worse. According to news reports and statements by the United Nations, Hezbollah has fully re-armed since August 2006. In early November, a new Lebanese government was formed which gives Hezbollah virtual veto power over major government decisions. This year, we witnessed significant violations of U.N. Security Council Resolutions, including:

On November 3rd, the Israeli Navy seized a vessel on its way to deliver the following Iranian weapons to Hezbollah in Southern Lebanon: 2,000 107mm rockets, 700 122mm rockets, 700 fuses for 122 mm rockets, 5,700 60mm mortar shells, 2,300 81mm mortar shells, 780 120mm mortar shells, 3,000 106mm recoilless artillery shells, 20,000 hand grenades, and 570,000 rounds of light arms ammunition.

On October 27th, a 107 mm rocket was fired from Lebanon at the northern Israeli city of Kiryat-Shmona.

On October 12th, an explosion occurred at a Hezbollah arms storage facility in the village of Tayr-Fils, south of the Litani River.

On September 11th, terrorists launched three Katyusha rockets from Lebanese territory, which landed near the city of Nahariya in northern Israel.

On July 17th, 15 Lebanese civilians crossed the Blue Line near a UNIFIL position near Shuba village, advanced 175 meters into Israeli territory and planted Hezbollah and Lebanese flags.

On July 14th, a Hezbollah arms depot housing rockets, mortars, artillery shells, grenades and additional ammunition exploded in the village of Khirbat-Salim.

On January 8th, three Katyusha rockets were fired from Lebanese territory into Israel striking a nursing home and injuring two elderly women in Nahariya, Israel.

For Fiscal Year 2010, the Administration requested \$210 million for UNIFIL and \$100 million in military assistance for the Government of Lebanon. For that much money, American taxpayers deserve to see results. Given the potential for an Iran-backed escalation on the Lebanese-Israeli border, the United States must use existing resources to counter this threat. In light of the clear violations of UN Security Council resolutions, we ask what actions the Administration is taking to ensure the U.N. addresses these violations. We must seek to support stronger multilateral efforts to disarm Hezbollah and clear Southern Lebanon of Iranian weapons.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this growing threat.

Sincerely,

Mark Steven Kirk (R-IL)

Steve Israel (D-NY)

Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL)

Eliot Engel (D-NY)

Peter Hoekstra (R-MI)

Robert Wexler (D-FL)

Mike Pence (R-IN)

Shelley Berkley (D-NV)

Roy Blunt (R-MO)

Anthony D. Weiner (D-NY)

Frank Wolf (R-VA)

Heath Shuler (D-NC)

Dan Burton (R-IN)

James A. Himes (D-CT)

Sue Wilkins Myrick (R-NC)

Steve Kagen (D-WI)

Virginia Foxx (R-NC)

Michael E. McMahon (D-NY)

John Boozman (R-AR)

Aaron Schock (R-IL)

Bob Inglis (R-SC)

Jerry Moran (R-KS)

Todd Tiahrt (R-KS)

Patrick T. McHenry (R-NC)

Frank A. LoBiondo (R-NJ)

John Kline (R-MN)

Erik Paulsen (R-MN)

Henry E. Brown Jr. (R-SC)

Doug Lamborn (R-CO)

Peter J. Roskam (R-IL)

Tim Murphy (R-PA)

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